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SIPDIS

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NSC JENDAYI FRAZER
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION U.S./IRAQI STANDOFF; HARARE

1. Under the headline "Will Bush attack Iraq?" the August 25 edition of the pro-government weekly "The Sunday Mirror" carried the following article in the "Scrutator," the unsigned column written by publisher Ibbo Mandaza:
2. "U.S. President George W. Bush's plan to wage war against Iraq is facing increasing dissent at home and abroad. Already, the entire Arab League. . .has expressed strong opposition to any proposed military attack on Iraq. . . Furthermore, U.S. plans to isolate Iraq and topple Saddam Hussein will now be damaged by an economic and trade cooperation agreement between Russia and Iraq concluded last Sunday. While Russia insists that the US\$40 billion deal will not violate the UN sanctions imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, the agreement is certain to damage relations between Moscow and Washington already cooled by Russian plans to step up nuclear cooperation with Iran, part of Bush's 'axis of evil.'

"In general, most of the allies of the U.S. are resisting the drum beating in Washington for military action against Iraq, arguing that an invasion cannot be justified without firm proof that Iraq is developing weapons of mass destruction. On the other hand, such 'proof' cannot be forthcoming without the 'weapons inspection' by the UN, a step now forestalled by the current war rhetoric against Iraq. For, Iraq would be foolish to allow 'weapons inspection' while the U.S. is preparing to attack it. However it is within Britain, the U.S.'s closest ally, that there is growing opposition, not only to the idea of attacking Iraq but also to the foreign and security policy of a super power that has grown so bellicose in its unipolar self-indulgence, that it has become blind to the contradictions that characterize contemporary globalization. Suddenly, even its key allies are reminding the U.S. of the need to adhere to the rules of the UN Security Council, including, at least by implication, a warning against the callous disregard for the sovereignty and national independence of (smaller) member states of the United Nations."

SULLIVAN